

VZCZCXRO5296  
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHAK #0866/01 1730355  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 220355Z JUN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9976  
INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 1419  
RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 5894  
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA// PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU PRIORITY  
RUEPGAB/MNF-I C2X BAGHDAD IZ PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000866

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR NEA/I AND EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/19/2029

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: MALIKI AIMS AT BARZANI; HITS DAVUTOGLU, TURK-IRAQI  
RELATIONS

REF: ANKARA 833

Classified By: DCM Doug Silliman for reasons 1.4(b,d)

¶1. (S) SUMMARY: The GOT has postponed FM Davutoglu's planned June 22-24/5 visit to six cities in Iraq because of PM Maliki's reported insistence that Davutoglu not go to Erbil (nor to Kirkuk or Mosul) during the visit. Maliki's "request" was delivered in ham-handed fashion by Maliki advisor Sadeq Ricabi, who told Turkish Ambassador Kanbay, "If Davutoglu goes to Erbil, don't bother coming to Baghdad." GOT officials are upset by Maliki's stance, with GOT Special Envoy for Iraq Murat Ozcelik calling it "unacceptable." The Turks decided to postpone the entire visit rather than proceed with a visit only to Baghdad, Basra, and Najaf, and do not intend to make the issue public. However, the Turks fear the Iraqi Kurds will make public Maliki's position, putting Ankara in an awkward position. GOT officials are hopeful USG officials can weigh in with Maliki to point out how counterproductive his decision is. END SUMMARY

¶2. (S) Ozcelik called us in to convey with great regret that MFA had had to cancel FM Davutoglu's six city tour of Iraq planned for June 22-24/5 (reftel). Although Iraqi officials had expressed no reservations about itinerary nor plans in the preceding weeks as it was being discussed, Sadeq Ricabi called in Turkish Ambassador Kanbay June 18 to convey PM Maliki's request that Davutoglu not travel to Erbil. Ricabi told Kanbay, "Iraq has only one capital, not two. We do not want the Foreign Minister to travel to Erbil. If he goes there, there is no need for him to come to Baghdad." Ricabi added that the security situation in both Kirkuk and Mosul remains uncertain and the Iraqis could not guarantee security in either city, so he should restrict his travel to Baghdad, Basra, and Najaf only. Ozcelik speculated that this smacks of Iranian influence, with Tehran trying its best to stem Turkish involvement with or influence over the Iraqi Kurds.

¶3. (S) Ricabi's English may not be the best and he did convey the message alone in English while meeting with Kanbay, according to Ozcelik, so the bluntness of the message was perhaps not intended. The Turks are more upset with Maliki's stance on the visit. Ozcelik noted the GOT has always been extremely supportive of Maliki and a strong central

government in Baghdad and said Maliki's efforts to limit Turkish contact with the Kurds (and apparently Sunnis) is "unacceptable." After hearing of Ricabi's message, Davutoglu called Ali Dabbagh to express concern. Dabbagh, according to Ozcelik, expressed regret about the way "Maliki's sensitivities" regarding a visit right now to Erbil were conveyed and apologized on behalf of Maliki.

¶4. (S) Ozcelik said Ricabi's message was actually somewhat worse, though he asked that USG officials please not indicate to the Iraqis that we know of this particular aspect of the Ricabi-Kanbay meeting. After warning that Davutoglu should not go to Erbil, Ricabi also said that unless Davutoglu is coming to Baghdad with the promise of substantially more water released by Turkey in the Euphrates, "the visit will not be well received by the Iraqi people." Ozcelik indicated the Turks will deal with the Iraqis on the water issue separately, though he reiterated that Turkey is unable to release more than the amount agreed upon in its bilateral agreement with Syria (500 cubic meters/second - of which Syria keeps 58 percent, and is supposed to send on 42 percent to Iraq).

¶5. (S) The Turks are concerned about how this will play out publicly in the coming days. Ozcelik plans to inform Barzani Chief of Staff Fuad Hussein about the reason for the postponement of the visit and will ask that Erbil keep quiet on it. He fears, however, that Barzani will publicize Maliki's stance, which the GOT will then be forced to deny both to avoid a larger fall-out between Baghdad and Ankara

ANKARA 00000866 002 OF 002

and domestic criticism from the opposition over the GOT decision to send Davutoglu to Erbil in the first place. Ozcelik, who has pushed Turkish bureaucracy hard to get engagement between Ankara and Erbil started, pointed out the Turks had taken a very strategic approach in getting broad agreement to have Davutoglu visit Barzani in Erbil even after Barzani had refused to travel to Baghdad to meet with President Gul in March. He was visibly frustrated that Turkish efforts to raise Turkish-Iraqi and Turkish-KRG relations to the next level had been stymied.

¶6. (S) Ozcelik said he now has no plans to travel to Baghdad anytime soon and, in fact, anticipates the next time he goes may be in August as the new Ambassador to Iraq. However, the Turks' request for agreement on his appointment continues to languish in President Talabani's office and he asked that whatever help the US could provide in urging Talabani to shake that loose would be appreciated.

¶7. (S) COMMENT: Turkey's decision to "postpone", but not cancel, the visit and its effort to keep the spat private point to Ankara's commitment to a long-term relationship with all of Iraq, not just Maliki and the Shia. The Turks' decision to ask the United States to see if we can talk sense into Maliki hearkens back to the period in the not so distant past when much of the GOT's dialogue with the Iraqis flowed through Embassies Ankara and Baghdad. Maliki's position is truly unfortunate: the Turks are among the best friends Maliki has in supporting a unified Iraq governed by a strong central government in Baghdad. While the GOT does want to develop closer political, economic, energy, counter-PKK, etc. relations with Erbil, it is ironic that Maliki does not seem to realize he has no better friend than the Turks in trying to hold Iraq together and tied firmly to Baghdad.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at  
[http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turk\\_ey](http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Turk_ey)

JEFFREY